



LIBERATION NEWS SERVICE

NO. 225

JANUARY 14, 1970

LNS #225 Jan. 14, 1970

Staff Collective

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN SOLDIER: Soldiers Rap ..	1
Calley Rally Flops.....	7
Reservists Circulate Anti-War Petition ..	7
National Conference on Repression Planned ..	7
Wisconsin Re-Institutes Women's Curfew ..	7
INTERVIEW WITH A BRAZILIAN REVOLUTIONARY ..	8
YSA Meets in Minneapolis ..	13
Administration Takes Over Wisconsin State Student Newspaper ..	14

COVER: Photo by Howie Epstein. CREDIT: LNS

George Cavalletto	Bob Heilbroner
Beryl Epstein	Alan Howard
Howie Epstein	Karen Kearns
Barbara Feinstein	Andy Marx
Mark Feinstein	Penny Orr
David Fenton	Barbara Rothkrug
Ted Franklin	Sheila Ryan
Ralph Greenspan	Mike Shuster
Nick Gruenberg	Allen Young
Comrades	
Dick Morgan	Jon Fenton
Kathy Mulvihill	Jorge Caputo
Karen Wald (West Coast)	John Sollenberger

NOTE: In packet #223, LNS ran an excerpt from the book Fanshen by William Hinton. The excerpt was entitled "Half of China." Fanshen was originally published by the Monthly Review Press.

LIBERATION News Service

Jan. 14, 1970

Issue #225

Published two times a week

Subscription rates: \$15 a month, \$180 a year

160 Claremont Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10027

Phone: (212) - 749-2200

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE

PAID AT NEW YORK, NY

IF YOUR PACKET IS DEFICIENT, LET US KNOW AND WE'LL TRY TO RECTIFY THE
SITUATION IF IT'S URGENT, WE WILL SEND IT SPECIAL DELIVERY

THE MAKING OF AN AMERICAN SOLDIER: SOLDIERS RAP
LIBERATION News Service

DRILL SERGEANT: When you left your home, you were in your mother's care, now you're in MY care. From now on, every time you move, breathe, piss or blow your nose it will be what I tell you to do. From now on you will do as you're told, and that is the ONLY way you will do. IS THAT CLEAR?!!!

TRAINEES (In chorus): YES SIR!!!

DRILL SERGEANT: Maybe you didn't hear me so good -- I SAID IS THAT CLEAR?!!!!

TRAINEES: YES SIR!!!!

--from a tape of Marine Training

* * *

"They try to terrorize you right off the bat," says Steve Boyd, a 20-year-old Vietnam veteran, son of a Hartford, Conn., machine shop foreman. "They put you in an atmosphere of complete fear. They isolate you, strip you of your identity. They tell you to stop thinking -- they tell you THEY'LL do your thinking for you. Let the Army be your mind."

Steve is leaning back on a rusty folding chair in one of the GI-movement coffee houses that have sprung up at most of the major Army bases across the country. He pushes his fatigue cap back on his head, a short shock of freshly-grown yellow hair falls into his serious face. "That's why they shave your head -- to take away anything that has to do with the way want to be. They cut you off from anything that reminds you of who you used to be."

"People don't realize why soldiers march," says Staff Sergeant Rick Williams, a husky, quiet-spoken soldier of Southern poor-white origin. "It's because when you march you don't have a mind of your own. You can't think about a right face before you get the order, or you'll do it before it's time. Once you get a solider to march, you can get him to do just about anything you tell him."

Williams, whose father was a Marine Sergeant, has been in the Army for seven years, and commanded a combat platoon in Vietnam. He was a guard at the notorious Long Binh Army stockade. "The

idea of Basic Training is to tear you completely and suddenly away from everything that is part of your identity. They shave your head, take away your clothes, make you send home all your belongings, give you all the same clothes -- everything to tell you that you're no-longer an individual -- you're a company, and your conscience happens to be the company commander."

* * *

DRILL INSTRUCTOR: Today you will eat your first meal in the Army. I will run you in in two lines. This is known as a chow line. You will take one tray per man. The next thing you will see are bins. In these bins are knives, forks and spoons. Each man will take one knife, one fork and one spoon. You will put them in your right hand. You will hold your tray in both hands. The next thing you see will be a cup. You will put this in your left hand. You will not talk. You will march straight in. You will stand until the order "ready seats." When you go into a chow hall you eat everything you take. When you are through eating you will march outside. You will eat and get out of the mess-hall -- you will not sit and talk. When you get outside, you will get into two formations and stand at attention until your DI (Drill Instructor) gets outside. Everyone will be outside when I get outside. IS THAT CLEAR!!!!

* * *

"It's like crossing a threshold into a totally new world -- and you have no idea what you're headed for," says another soldier. "The first thing they say is 'you will now form up.' You don't even know what a formation is, but they purposely act as though you did. They purposely give you orders you can't obey, and then they yell at you for making a mistake -- so you'll learn to be responsive. The idea is to let you know right away that you are in the total control and power of an organized structure."

"The main thing," says a big, burly blond soldier, "is fear. You realize that they can do anything they want to you.

"There was this one guy -- I think he was mentally sick -- that the DI used to pick out. Once, before inspection, the DI hid a coat hanger under

this guy's mattress. At inspection, he found it. 'Starr,' (that was the guy's name) 'you're in the Army now. You can't hide shit under your mattress,' he said, and beat the shit out of him. Then he tore up the whole room, throwing all our stuff around and told us he'd be back to inspect it again in two minutes.

"Another time, the DI beat the shit out of this same guy and when he finally collapsed he kicked him in the stomach so he puked. Then he opened the door into where we were all watching a propaganda movie, stopped the movie and turned on the lights so we could all see Starr lying in his puke. 'I want you men to look at something,' he said, 'I want you to see the kind of trash we have to put up with.'

"I just felt sick and scared -- you feel like the only thing that matters is that you get out -- out of basic -- so then you're out, but you're out the way they want you out.

"There was only one guy, a black guy, who belted a DI back -- knocked him right on his ass. The DI went downstairs and got three other sergeants. They held him and beat him for fifteen minutes. He was a little ball lying on the floor. They told him to 'get out' -- he couldn't walk -- tried to crawl out -- they kicked him and he fell on his face. He puked blood for a few days. They wouldn't let him see a medic."

"They consciously keep you confused and exhausted to lower your resistance," says Steve. "Like they'll have seven fire drills in one night, the first one two minutes after you get to bed. They purposely give you obviously meaningless things to do -- like clean things over and over that are already clean -- just so you get used to not thinking that there has to be a reason for doing something -- you do it BECAUSE YOU ARE TOLD."

"Your footlocker has a 'personal area' the size of a cigar box," says an Airman. "That's all the personal property you're allowed -- you can keep five letters that you've been sent a week -- if you get more you have to throw them out. All the rest of your footlocker is designated space -- socks here, shorts here, etc. In

the center are your stripes, in a certain position, held together with a rubber band. When training is over you will have the 'honor' of wearing them. This is just to give you something to look forward to. You are told how to fold your things. They must be 'flush' and 'single edged.' They give you a 4 by 6 notebook to use as a guide to measure your folding.

"It takes you a while to grasp that they are serious about it," continues the shy young Airman, a sociology instructor before enlisting to avoid the draft. (He was chosen by his Training Instructor, the Air Force version of the Drill Instructor, to be "House Mouse." "The House Mouse gets to clean the Training Instructor's boots, wash his dishes, make his bed, do his paperwork," he explains.) "But pretty soon you realize they're deadly serious about it. Once my T.I. came in and said, 'I hope I'm not going to find anything wrong in your locker, because if I do you're going to eat it -- AREN'T YOU, SIMMONS!!!!' One of my laundry marks wasn't centered and he literally made me pretend to eat it."

* * *

DRILL INSTRUCTOR: This afternoon you dropped your rifle.

TRAINEE: Yes, sir.

D.I.: A marine and his rifle are the best weapon in the world. You are not a marine yet, and I doubt if you ever will be one, but I'll clue you boy, you had best NEVER drop your rifle. You had best take better care of your rifle than you ever thought of taking care of yourself. You got that?

TRAINEE: Yes, sir!

D.I.: You had to drop it, huh?

T.: No, sir!

D.I.: What do you mean no sir, you dropped it didn't you?

T.: Yes, sir!

D.I.: Are you calling me a liar?

T.: No, sir!

D.I.: Then why did you have to drop that rifle?

T.: I don't know, sir!

D.I.: What do you mean, you don't know sir. Look, your job is to become a good marine. You had better get with the program.

* * *

"The way they totally degrade you -- treat you like dirt and make you kiss the DI's ass -- it builds up a tremendous hate that just builds and builds up inside you because you can't let it out," Steve Boyd explains. "I guess they figure if they can build up enough hate in you, you'll fall right into their stuff."

* * *

DRILL INSTRUCTOR: You people are out here for your third phase of bayonet training. Now remember one thing: on the bayonet course we only teach the art of killing, and that's all.

That's what I like to see -- a little man get out here and do something. That's all it takes. It's not how big you are, it's how good and aggressive you are. Make some noise and swing that blade -- realize you want to cut somebody's head right off his shoulders.

* * *

"At first you don't actually realize the hate coming out in you," says Steve. "You notice it when you go home on your first leave. Your whole philosophy becomes 'I don't give a fuck.' You're quicker than you ever were to have spurts of violence and get into fights."

"Then when you go back to the Army, it's like sinking deeper and deeper into depression every mile you get closer to base. All the things you started to gain back in two weeks -- your personal insights, your feelings, everything you relate with on the outside -- you feel it slowly slipping away from you. That's why guys hang on to little symbols, like beads and stuff -- it's a way to relate yourself to your feelings -- because all you believe in is becoming buried inside you."

"Then they take all this fear and hate and relate it to Vietnam. The DIs tell you horror stories: 'Over in Nam, if you don't get Charlie before he gets you, he'll cut your nuts off. We used to take the gooks up in helicopters to question them. If they answered, we'd push them out anyway,' and another time he told us about 'my buddy who flipped out and blew away some cook women and babies -- he really did them a job -- outasight!!!' And you're in such a state of mind -- you're not human anymore, you're just a step you of

all personal feelings -- you're in such a trance or fucked up condition you laugh right along with him -- you don't actually see what he's saying and think about it."

"One thing they keep trying to build up in your mind is that the people you're going to fight are sadistic and inhuman, and you should show them no kindness. They keep telling you you can't trust any of them. They tell you that the Vietcong tie bombs right onto babies and explode you and the baby."

"I begin to realize now, the DI's life is totally miserable too. A man wouldn't choose a job like that -- it's mostly guys with no education -- people who this society doesn't offer any decent alternative. It's about the only thing some of these guys could do to gain the "respect" of their society. Society twists them up, and then they let all their problems out on you. Like eight weeks into my training my Drill Sergeant cracked up completely. He beat up his wife -- put her in the hospital -- and psyched out. They put him in the hospital and we got a new one."

"All that bayonet training stuff," says Sgt. Rick Williams, "is just part of the general psych -- to get you in a kill mood. They make you yell, 'Kill, kill, kill!' and plunge your bayonet into dummies. They want you to get used to not thinking about it. When somebody says kill, you kill. They don't even use bayonets in Nam -- at least they didn't when I was there -- it was just to psych people to kill."

"You get to where it seems the best way to deal with a problem is to wipe it out, silence it, put it away from you so you can't see it -- even if it still exists."

"After basic you either have to use that hate, or try to get rid of it. If somebody calls you a name, you jump on him. As if it would make him think you were not what he called you."

"The Army plays on your fear and your ignorance. I don't mean stupidity, I mean ignorance. They make sure you're ignorant of what they're gonna do to you next -- where you're gonna go, etc."

"Before guys go in, they should educate themselves about the consequences of certain actions --

to fight the fear of the unknown. And they should cope with the fear of the stockade -- so it no longer seems like the final blow. Once you know that, you can deal with it.

"It's a basic struggle. You have to remember who and what you were before you went into the Army. But that's hard -- not too many people know-- and if you don't, the Army tells you who you are."

* * *

"I got sucked in -- I was one of their puppets," says Dave Rossi. Rossi is a Military Police Sergeant E-5, a big, clean-cut guy, a Vietnam veteran, and, until he started speaking out against stockade atrocities, a stockade guard both in Nam and in the U.S.

"I got to be platoon guide, the Sergeant's assistant, and then acting Sergeant -- a candy stripper. I got the position because I asked for it -- not necessarily in so many words --" he thinks back and shakes his head, "as a matter of fact, I actually came right out and ASKED for it. Guys were fucking up, and I told the Sergeant I thought I could make them comply.

"They turn you against each other. When one guy fucks up, we all lost our weekend passes. I got to hate the guys who fucked up. So I dedicated myself to make guys comply to the military way -- I really did." he shakes his head again, "I was a dedicated individual.

"I was so dedicated I became team leader and assistant squad leader, I really made guys do the military thing. I was good at it. I used more tact, treated guys better -- but it was the same thing -- still the fear thing because they knew if they didn't do what I said they were in trouble.

"How do you get into that mentality? They take EVERYTHING away from you. They shave your head, strip you of all identity, take away your clothes, you're naked and scared in a totally new environment. Every hour they hit you with something new. All you ever get called is shithead, or faggot, or girl -- they degrade you so much that you need to do something to prove yourself -- to gain some self-respect. Doing good at their thing is the only way you can distinguish yourself.

"They told me if I did this stuff I was a MAN. And I believed them.

"But really I was so scared and miserable... can you believe I refused to go back home when my brother was dying -- I was so scared they would recycle me through basic training again if I missed time.

"You see I was the all-American boy from Baltimore. My parents are like suburban upper-middle class -- I joined the Army because I got bored with school. My hair was never any longer than it is now," he runs his fingers through his close cropped blond hair. "Only the sideburns are new. I was gonna become a career officer and save my country from communism, except i fell asleep during my CO test at 4:30 in the morning. I went to a real strict all-Catholic school -- everything in my life prepared me to try to succeed at whatever I was told to do -- the Army was just a little more so.

"I first started to get disgusted with the Army when I was a stockade guard.

"The first thing they teach you is to fear the prisoners -- so your immediate reaction is to scare the prisoners. That's why some of the stockade guards are so brutal. That was three years ago. Nowadays, the prisoners aren't scared anymore; they're together -- it's beautiful.

"I was a tower guard. Would I have shot a prisoner trying to escape?" (he thinks a minute). "Yeah, sure -- it was my job. I wasn't about to question my job then.

"I especially remember one prisoner. He was a Mexican immigrant. A grape picker from Michigan -- hardly spoke any English. They kept him in seg (solitary confinement) for 82 days on nothing but rabbit food. He got kind of crazy. He tore his blanket in half one night. So they gave him only half a blanket. He tore that up, so they took it away, and took away his clothes too.

"He got a hold of a razor blade one day and cut off all his hair -- I don't know why. He'd howl all night. The guards used to put the hose on him and beat him 'til he shut up. One day he tried to burn all his hair off. He really burned himself pretty bad. I remember I sprayed him with the hose. But it wasn't like to help him -- it was like for a joke-- 'Hah hah, you're on fire, hah hah, now you're wet.'

It was pretty lousy, I guess.

"Then I volunteered for Nam -- I wanted a change of scene. I guess I thought it would be exciting or something.

"The first thing I noticed over there was the corruption. All the U.S. officers getting rich on the black market -- and the way the South Vietnamese national and military police were just a bunch of goons, beating the shit out of their own people -- these were people we were supposed to be defending.

"But I still kept saying, 'It's O.K., it's O.K., they can do it' -- only after a while it's not O.K. anymore.

"One thing that helped was good ole marijuana. The first time I smoked it was in Nam. I couldn't understand why it was illegal -- this wasn't anything wrong. Grass helped me become aware of things I had pushed aside. Grass helps you realize what's important and what's not. It lets you pull yourself out of a situation and look down at it and say, 'What is this shit.' And then you come down again and you object.

"I think it would have happened anyway, but it helped me see us being in Nam for what it was-- nothing but a money-making motherfucker.

"I shot at people -- I can't tell if I actually killed any, but I was trying.

"Could I have done what the guys at Songmy did?" (He gets very serious, thinks a minute.)

"Yes, I think I could have done it. I'm talking about the way I was then, you understand -- but not a baby -- I kind of contradict myself I guess -- I don't really think so. Well, if ordered to kill someone, I guess I would have."

* * *

Let us assume we lose Indochina. The tin and tungsten that we so greatly value from that area would cease coming. So when the U.S. votes \$400 million to help that war we are not voting a give-away program. We are voting for the cheapest way to prevent the occurrence of something that would be of the most terrible significance to our power and ability to get certain things we need from the riches of Indochina.

-- President Eisenhower, 1953

* * *

About half of Vietnam is a "free fire zone," Steve Boyd explains. "I spent all of my time in Nam in free fire zones. That's a place where there are supposed to be no allies or peaceful people. Anything you see -- shoot it. It puts you under unbelievable tension -- you're nervous every second, you can't sleep at night -- you find yourself constantly shaking.

"My buddy would sometimes spend the whole night whining, 'Mom, Mom, please help me.' In the dark, anything that moves -- shoot it. The villagers are supposed to have a curfew.

"You just try to keep alive. All you think about is getting out of there -- everybody just counts the days.

"You just live in a world of fear of every gook that's around. You catch on pretty quick that the Vietcong has the support of practically all the villagers.

"Could I have done the Songmy massacre stuff?" He nods soberly, his eyes far off. "After I was hit real bad with shrapnel the first time, if I'd been told to wipe out a village, I might have done it -- you're momentarily insane. In a state of battle fatigue, you straight don't give a fuck. I just had a natural hate for whatever hit me -- gooks.

"When I got back home, just a little while back, I was playing golf with my father and the ball went into the woods. I refused to go into the woods after it, I was so scared -- I thought somebody was gonna shoot at me -- this is in Connecticut..

"EVERYBODY smokes grass over there, but mostly it's a bad kind of smoking, not like sometimes when you learn stuff. Over there the more I smoked the more I just ran away from my thoughts.

"When I got home, I was desperate for some decent reasons for things in my own mind. I got home and I realized that these people that were marching were going out of their way to bring me home..

"The hardest part is learning about how the Vietcong are really right -- how they've got the support of their people. It really hurts you when you find that out -- you feel really fucked up -- like I killed gooks. I didn't really want to do it,

but I wasn't aware that my subconscious mind was against it when I did it."

"To make progress in this country (Vietnam), it is necessary to level everything. The inhabitants must go back to zero, lose their traditional culture, for it blocks everything."

--American diplomat in Vietnam

"The Vietcong is a powerful force which cannot be dislodged from its constituency as long as the constituency continues to exist."

--Samuel Huntington, Chairman, State Department task force on Vietnam

* * *

"Over in Nam I killed my share of men -- you gotta kill Charlie gook before he comes and kills you." The speaker is an AWOL ex-Marine Drill Sergeant. He was a member of the Hell's Angels motorcycle gang before he volunteered. He's a tall, thin highstrung guy.

"I hated Charlie Cong," he says. "They really brainwashed us -- showed us pictures of GIs with their heads cut off -- said that's what Charlie would do to us.

"I hated all gooks. I walked into a hut once, and there was a gook woman and some kids. I just blew them all away, rat tat tat." He smiles a nervous, broken-toothed smile. "I'd watched my buddy step on a land mine. We used to push them out of helicopters all the time." He laughs nervously again. "I just kicked this one guy out with my boot like this" -- he demonstrates.

"I've seen bodies, and I've smelt bodies. You ever smell a burnt body. It's not funny (he laughs). Most of us are brainwashed where we don't care.

"I was at Hell's Pass, you know, Hamburger Hill. The gung-ho captain sent 56 marines up the hill. About a dozen of them made it to the top. We were backing them up. We lost about five or six hundred men before we took that hill. Forty-eight hours later we left it.

"You better not see any brass out on the field. Never a Colonel, or a General -- they know better. I watched my best buddy shoot this gung ho Lieutenant -- he poured a full clip into

him -- five-hundred rounds. He split him right in half (he laughs); half a Lieutenant here, half a Lieutenant there.

"About half the company saw it. I just grinned. We all said Charlie did it. This gung ho mother-fucker had gotten almost his whole squad wiped out while he hid behind a tree.

"I came back after getting shot at in Nam, and I get the same old shit here. They made me a DI, and I was rough. Finally, I said just cause I went through this shit is no reason they should. I got tired of sending guys to kill and sending guys to their deaths. That's why I went AWOL.

"Shit. I was walking down the block a few days ago with two big packages of groceries. I heard a car backfire and I hit the ground -- groceries all over the place. People stand around and laugh-- ha ha ha -- only it's not funny.

"If I saw a gook walk down the street right here [he points out in the street], I'd blow him away before you could bat an eye -- I'm a trained killer in the year of the pig."

* * *

"When I was a guard in the Long Binh stockade, there were 23 guys there for killing their commanding officers, and 17 more on trial," says Rick Williams. "They weren't all very political guys, but they knew they were pissed off.

"My most unbelievable experience -- where I really learned what communism was all about -- was when I got to talk to some North Vietnamese prisoners.

"The only way I could get to talk to them was to guard them. They were in the prison hospital. There were five of them -- four men and a woman. The woman had had her vagina cut out by some of Thieu's South Vietnamese soldiers. She was in unbelievable pain. One of the five spoke English and told me what happened to her.

"I expected them to hate Americans. But she wasn't bitter -- she smiled and talked to me. That's when I got my first feeling for what revolution is all about -- love. They said they had no hatred for GIs -- they weren't going to fall into that bag of hating.

"I asked them what I could do. They said

'demonstrate, tell people at home what's happening here. Continue the struggle at home."

-30

[Note to editors for above story see related graphic in this package and photo of crying soldier on cover of packet #215, Dec. 3, 1969. If you've misplaced the latter, let us know and we'll send you another one.]

CALLEY RALLY A FLOP -- SUPERPATRIOTS DISAPPOINTED

ATLANTA (LNS) -- Superpatriots have been trying to turn Lt. William Calley, accused of playing a major role in the Song My massacre, into some sort of a military hero.

Last month, members of the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars planned a rally in support of Calley. They expected 3,000 people, but only 34 showed up.

The organizers of the pro-Calley movement, while "depressed" about the poor turnout at the rally, haven't given up. Now, they plan a petition drive to "protest the unjust and unwarranted charges" against Calley. The petitions are being circulated through Legion and VFW posts throughout the Southeast.

The prosecution of Calley by the Army, the petitioners argue, is "playing into the hands of the Communists."

-30-

RESERVISTS CIRCULATE ANTI-WAR PETITION

BERKELEY, Cal. (LNS) -- Reservists and National Guardsmen across the country -- America's part-time military men -- are circulating an anti-war petition. "We want to show the American public that dissenters against the war include men in uniform -- a lot of them," said Adam Hochschild and Robert Scott for the Reservists Committee to Stop the War, sponsors of the petition. For copies of the petition to circulate and sign, write: Reservists Committee to Stop the War, P.O. Box 4398, Berkeley, CA 94704.

-30-

BOYCOTT GE PRODUCTS

COME OUT!--NEW GAY NEWSPAPER IS PUBLISHED

NEW YORK (LNS) -- New York's Gay Liberation front has begun publishing a newspaper, called Come Out! The paper, staffed by homosexual men and women, is a forum for the gay community. It also attempts to link the fight of homosexuals against their own oppression to other liberation struggles in America. For a sample copy, send 25¢ to Come Out!, Box 92, Village Station, New York, N.Y. 10014.

-30

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON REPRESSION PLANNED

DETROIT (LNS) -- A National Conference on Repression is planned to take place in Detroit and Ann Arbor in late January. Sponsored by the People Against Racism, the conference speakers will include William Kunstler, Jerry Rubin, David Hilliard and others. For further information, write to People Against Racism, 5705 Woodward, Detroit, MI 48202.

-30-

WISCONSIN RE-INSTITUTES WOMEN'S CURFEW

By Collegiate Press Service

MADISON, Wisc. -- CPS/LNS -- While many schools have been abandoning women's curfew hours (most recently the University of Iowa), the state board of regents of the University of Wisconsin has voted to re-instate women's hours for freshmen. The ruling takes effect in September, 1970. Hours for coeds were abolished in 1968.

The measure, which was passed by the Regents over the objection of the university administration, sets midnight curfews on weeknights and 2 a.m. curfews on weekends. The reason for the move, according to one regent, is that many students are "immature" and "need guidance."

The Wisconsin Students Association is taking the matter to court, charging the rule discriminates against women and that the regents are not authorized to make rules governing social conduct.

The Wisconsin regents have also passed a ruling banning the use of bullhorns and other methods of electronic amplification at political events, while allowing the continued use of such equipment at campus carnivals and homecoming. Several students are contesting the ban's constitutionality

-30-

Page 7 LIBERATION News Service (#225) January 14, 1970 more...

INTERVIEW WITH A BRAZILIAN REVOLUTIONARY

LIBERATION News Service

(The following interview is with a young Brazilian intellectual revolutionary who has been travelling outside of Brazil on a mission for the organization known as VAR-Palmares. Ari -- that's what we'll call him -- agreed to make this tape clandestinely for Liberation News Service.)

* * *

LNS: Could you tell us something about the regime in Brazil?

ARI: Well, the Brazilian government at this time is a military government, with a strong tendency to fascism. I'm not saying that it is a fascist government, because it has been incapable of organizing any base among the people to support it: It is a repressive government. The essentials of this repression are directed by the police, and by some secret fascist groups, groups which have protection from the police. But this government has no political support from the people. It survives only on the basis of a repressive police power. While this government is essentially reactionary in its policies, it has, at the same time, the intention of making some reforms, some economic modernization, but without any essential social transformation. The objective of this reform is to diminish tension in the country and to permit vast development of industry and the rest of the capitalist economy.

LNS: Is the Brazilian economy closely tied with American interests?

ARI: At this time, the most important sectors of the Brazilian economy are controlled by American capital. About 50% of the important businesses in the country are American. So foreign capital is a part of the Brazilian economy, one of the strongest economic institutions of the country. A second aspect is this - the Brazilian economy is fundamentally dependent on the American economy, not only in the aspect of investment, but also in trade relations and foreign aid. The Brazilian government is essentially in direct relation and collaboration with the US government

And the third point is that the repressive policy of the Brazilian government is directly dependent on American support, that this support is given to the military -- to the army directly -- and to the police. The Brazilian police are trained by American police, and Brazilian repression is directly linked to the American government. And if you go to the press, to other sectors of society, you will see that Americans have control over all aspects of Brazilian life. There are some points of disagreement between the Brazilian government and the American government, but these are not essential. There are differences of judgment about some aspects of Brazilian politics and some aspects of the economy, but not over any essential points.

LNS: Up until a few years ago, there was very little noticeable political activity in Brazil. More recently we've heard about some kind of new movement for change. What are the basic thrusts of this movement in Brazil?

ARI: Until 1964 [when a military coup d'etat overthrew the capitalist reformist government of President Joao Goulart], the popular movement in Brazil was essentially a nationalist movement, which believed in the possibility of developing a national capitalist economy and to develop the country in anti-imperialist terms but through capitalist development. After the coup d'etat, the situation became much more clear to the people. They know today that Brazilian capitalism and American capitalism are the same thing. It is impossible to further national development in terms of a capitalist economy. So, after 1964, there was a radicalization of this movement in the direction of a socialist movement.

The other aspect, and it is very important, is this. Until 1964 people trusted in the possibility of bringing about very substantial change in the country through legal means. Brazilian democracy was very much accepted by the people, who felt confident it was possible to bring about major changes without confrontation, civil war or revolutionary movements. After 1964, the situation changed very much, and everyone who today thinks that some substantial change is necessary thinks

that this will not be possible without a revolutionary movement and armed struggle

LNS: Would you say that the movement is currently characterized by urban guerrilla warfare?

ARI: At this point, the essential action of these groups is in the cities. The peasants have not been very well organized, and it is in the cities that the left and the popular movements have had their best support. For a long time, the left had sought to start the fight by working in the country, with the peasants, but they discovered that it was impossible to start there, since there was no real political and social base in the country. The base they had was in the cities, so they began fighting in the cities. At this time, the intention is to obtain economic resources, weapons and the material base to wage a long fight.

LNS: Is there an underground press in Brazil?

ARI: Yes, there is an underground press, but it is very difficult to distribute this material. This is done very clandestinely. People who are found with these papers are jailed, tortured and all that. So that it is a very hard thing to maintain this kind of underground press -- but they have this press in Brazil, and there are a lot of publications, most of them mimeographed.

LNS: You mentioned the gathering of financial resources, and we have read about the many bank robberies which are taking place in Brazil. Could you describe something about how these actions take place?

ARI: Essentially what people do is to study some bank and how it functions. They prepare the action very carefully. Sometimes they do a small action, sometimes a more important bank. A lot of people are working on this at the moment. It's relatively easy to do this because at least the police don't know where the action will happen, so they do not control the situation. It's relatively easy as a tactic. Sometimes the commandos have been very daring. In one case, they surrounded a whole block and robbed four banks at the same time. Sometimes they set up a detour for

traffic and they tell the people in the cars and the pedestrians that they're expropriating money. Sometimes they do propaganda work during the action. They explain the action to the people. Sometimes, it's quite funny. One man was making a deposit in the bank, and he gave his money to the commandos. But they said to him, "Are you putting this money in the bank or not?" and he said, "Oh, no, I haven't deposited it yet," so they told him, "OK, you keep the money, because we rob banks, not people." This kind of thing, reported by the newspapers, was very well received by the people, especially the working class, the low income sectors.

LNS: What were the main reasons for the kidnapping of the American ambassador? A lot of people heard about that in the U.S.

ARI: In the first place, everyone in the American embassy is an expression of American imperialism in Latin America. All actions against these people are very well received, not only by leftists, but by all the people. And the second thing is that it was very important to denounce the ties of the Brazilian government to the American government. It is clear that if the guerrillas would have taken the ambassador of Haiti, or any little country in Latin America, they would never exchange the ambassador of this country for 15 prisoners. It was a way to show the dependence of the Brazilian government on the American government. A third aspect was that it was very important to break the control and censorship of the press. The guerrilla movement demanded the distribution of a proclamation in all the Brazilian publications, radio and television, so all people in the country could know the position of the guerrillas, and this was very important. This was one of the conditions for the release of the ambassador.

LNS: Could you say something about how many people are involved in the movement and what plans they have for growth?

ARI: There are a lot of people involved in the movement. At the moment, there are many people who are underground, about 1,000 to 2,000 people who are being pursued, sought by the police. There are also people from the movement who are in prison. And

there are people who are working within the law, people not known as leftists or as supporters of the movement -- but they are supporting the movement. We can say that there is really a lot of support for this movement

LNS: One of the leaders of the Brazilian movement, Carlos Marighella, was killed recently. Can you tell us something about him and also about some of the surviving leaders?

ARI: Carlos Marighella was one of the main leaders of the Communist Party in Brazil. The Communist Party has not taken a revolutionary position on the situation in Brazil. They think it is possible to go back to a democratic government, to what they call a re-democratization of the country.

This position isolates the Communist Party and puts it in a position of alliance with liberals in Brazil and has made them lose support in the popular movement. This situation led Marighella and other leaders of the Communist Party to a revolutionary position, made them get out from the Party. Marighella had a substantial past experience of working in a clandestine movement. He was jailed in the time of the dictatorship of Getulio Vargas, and he went underground in the period after 1947, when the Communist Party was made illegal. He was also a very audacious man and he initiated some of these insurrectionary actions personally. He didn't merely command the actions, but he went directly to be in them.

The other leaders of the movement are essentially unknown people, essentially young people from the student movement or the labor movement. They are well known among the students and among the workers, but not well known in the press, not nationally famous.

One person with a national name is Captain Carlos Lamarca. He was very famous at first because he was one of those who was responsible for the repression against the bank robberies; he trained people to defend the banks and all that. But at the same time he was working for the VAR-Palmares, at that time the VPR, the Vanguarda Popular Revolucionaria. When he concluded it was very difficult for him to stay in the Army in

this position. He devised a plan to take a truck-load of weapons from the barracks where he was stationed. He carried out this action, and well, it was a very important action which demoralized the government and the army a lot.

LNS: Marighella I know, was a mulatto. Is there a significant participation of black and brown people in the revolutionary movement?

ARI: Oh, yes, some of the leaders of the movement are black people -- what you call black in the United States, what we call mulatto in Brazil, and some of them are black, we would call them black in Brazil. They have very important positions. At this time, a large portion of the black people in Brazil are workers. As the movement goes deeper into the working class, you have blacks in the leadership of the movement. And that's what's happening now, the movement's going to have very important support in the working class. Black leadership appears at the same time. There is no difference between the black leaders and the white leaders, there is only one movement.

LNS: How do the revolutionary groups relate to the labor movement?

ARI: Well, the labor movement was one of the most attacked movements after the coup d'etat. The government intervened in all trade unions. It was very difficult to reorganize the workers. The reorganization did not involve the trade unions. The movement went directly to the plants, to the factories, setting up secret organizing committees in each factory, each workplace.

LNS: The political organization being directed by workers themselves, or by students?

ARI: By workers themselves, the people that work in the factory. And this kind of organization is very hard because it's very difficult to centralize all these small groups in each factory. In 1966, when there was some possibility of legal activity, this movement could reveal itself publicly. There were two particularly important strikes, one in Osasco in Sao Paulo, and one in the Industrial City in Minas Gerais. These strikes were very strong. The workers occupied the factories, but not with weapons. They had no weapons, so the Army came directly to the factory and took over, killing several people in the process. There were some

attempts at more national strikes by the bank-workers, for example. But then the government intervened again in all trade unions and kicked out the leadership that was elected under very difficult conditions. You see, to be elected to the trade unions, a candidate had to have approval from the political police, so the movement could only present as candidates people unknown to the police. But even under these circumstances, the movement was able to control several trade unions. But now, since the government has intervened again in all the unions, they will not permit any trade union elections. They know they will lose any election they hold. So it's very difficult now to carry out any action.

LNS: Do women play an important role in the insurrectionary movement?

ARI: There are some women whose pictures are cut out from newspapers and put on the walls of people's homes -- because they rob banks. They have a very important participation in all military operations, and some of them are important people in the leadership of the movement -- in the student movement and in the underground movement. It's true that Brazil is a very paternalistic country, but the young people in the country are undergoing very rapid change, and since the leadership of the movement comes from the youth, women have a very important place. I'm not saying that there are no differences -- there are. But it is true that the hardest armed confrontations have had important participation by women -- with guns, fighting.

LNS: Women are receiving arms and training along with the men?

ARI: Oh, yes. They operate militarily. Some of them are famous because they have taken part in robberies and they fight with the police. One of them was named "The Blond Terrorist." One woman in a miniskirt took part in the robberies -- people talked about that and the press printed a lot of sensationalist reporting.

LNS: Are you able to tell us something about the actual arms that are used by the insurrectionists, the kind of weapons, how they hope to obtain them in the future? Of course, you shouldn't talk about it if you can't.

ARI: No, no, that is public, because the majority of the weapons have been taken from the army. A month ago, there was much talk of how one commando group had come to a barracks with an order to make a check of all the weapons, which had been recently received from the U.S. They came to this State Guard barracks in the name of the Army, with a paper from the Army, an official document. They gave it to the commander of the State Guard, and they asked for the weapons. So the commander said, I need confirmation of that. So they called the command of the Army, and someone who answered there said it was OK, they needed to check over the weapons because they were faulty. So they gave them all the weapons, about 1,000 guns, and they put them all in a truck and drove off. Several actions like that were carried out. So they have arms. Carlos Lamarca, when he left the Army took about 200 rifles. The guerrillas want American arms sent to Brazil, because then they can have them.

LNS: You have been working with the group known as VAR-Palmares. Can you tell us something about this group, and where it gets its name from?

ARI: Well, VAP-Palmares, this group is the juncture of two important clandestine groups in Brazil, the VPR (Vanguarda Popular Revolucionario -- Popular Revolutionary Vanguard) and the COLINA (Comando de Libertacao Nacional -- National Liberation Command). VAR-Palmares is a national organization based on three main sources. One of these was Politica Operaria (Workers' Politics), the leftist organization in Brazil that made revolutionary propaganda in the early sixties but wasn't capable of going directly to a revolutionary fight. Some of the people involved in Politica Operaria left it to try to create a direct action organization. And a second group comes from the military -- sergeants and others who formed part of a nationalist movement that was expelled from the army. They have been integrated in the clandestine movement. A third source was workers who had important struggle committees. They didn't want to be involved merely in trade union activity, so they got into the clandestine movement also. So, as you can see, VAR-Palmares has a very good foundation -- with good political formation.

theoretical formation, and military formation, and people who have had mass activity. And so they could create a very strong organization. The difference between the VAR-Palmares from other organizations, such as the Marighella group, is that VAR-Palmares organized a political group with some internal democracy, and very important internal discussion, political discussion. The Marighella group was formed essentially to do military operations. It lacked internal channels for discussion. VAR-Palmares became more developed theoretically than the Marighella group, with a clearer strategic orientation; VAR-Palmares fights directly for socialism in Brazil, while Marighella thought that socialism must be the second phase of the movement, following the unification of all popular forces and the establishment of a popular government without a clear socialist organization. The VAR-Palmares fights directly to organize people for socialism and to educate the workers and the students in this position. The name VAR-Palmares means Vanguarda Armada Revolucionaria, Armed Revolutionary Vanguard. "Palmares" comes from an important aspect of Brazilian history. In the time of slavery, the slaves in Brazil escaped from the farms and organized quilombos -- black communities in the Brazilian jungle. These communities were very important. Some of them resisted several years and created important economies. In some cases, this included trade relations with the rest of the Brazilians, directly with the cities. The most important of these quilombos was Palmares. It was led by Zumbi, a legendary figure in Brazil. The fight of the slaves in Brazil is the same fight of the Brazilian people today.

LNS: What is the attitude of VAR-Palmares and the other insurrectionary groups toward internationalism and the world movement?

ARI: One thing is very important today in Brazil. The Brazilian leftist movement does not now want to be submitted to any international direction. We want to create our own strategy. This doesn't mean that we don't have a part in the international fight, that we don't conceive of ourselves as part of the international proletarian community, that we ignore internationalism.

We think in terms of working internationalism, but this internationalism must respect national differences, and differences of strategy. It's true that Brazilian revolutionaries are very critical of the orientation given by the Soviet Union to the international movement. They generally are closer to Cuban or Chinese orientation, but this doesn't mean directly accepting the international strategies defended by the Cubans or the Chinese. And they want to make their own criticisms and have the opportunity to judge independently what is happening in international affairs.

LNS: You referred before in passing to the question of torture. How is torture used by the government?

ARI: Well, torture today is more or less, how do you say, a daily activity of the Brazilian government. This is carried out by the police and the army, in particular the secret police of the Army. Some high military officials are directly involved in the torture. Torture is common, a daily thing, to these people. On occasion, the men in charge of torture in Rio have tortured prisoners all day and all night, not always with the intention of getting information. Once, just because an Army officer didn't like one guy, he extinguished cigarettes on his back all day, just because he didn't like him. People are so accustomed to giving out torture that they do that kind of thing. Torture is an instrument to obtain information about the movement, and they torture everybody. There are several cases of people who have had nothing to do with the movement, people who resisted hours and days of torture before the police realized that they did not know anything. A revolutionary, in general, has 24 hours to resist. That's sufficient time -- sometimes -- for the people he knows to discover he's in prison, enough time to get away from the place that they have been, to take the necessary measures to defend themselves. You have 24 hours to do that. After that whoever is in jail must say something; they usually say something. I don't know any case of people in prison who said nothing. The methods of torture are the most diverse, the

more

most refined. Electrical shocks, as well as modern psychological forms of torture. They put you in a dark room, where you don't know what's happening to you and you receive your food through a small hole. And there are the more direct forms of violence. A very useful thing that they use a lot is the "pau de arara" -- the parrot's perch. They tie people up to a stick by the hands and legs and let them hang down, letting them stay there for hours. It's impossible to move, and they apply electric shocks and so forth. Sometimes they call the parents of a woman and rape her in front of her parents or husband. There are all kinds of things that they imagine.

LNS: As this struggle intensifies, given what we know about history, there is a very good possibility of intervention by the Armed Forces of the United States. How is this affecting the attitude of the insurrectionary groups, and what do you think the American people who are opposed to U.S. imperialism should do to support the Brazilian movement?

ARI: All revolutionary movements in Brazil at this time have a clear idea that this intervention will happen. We don't know where, or when, but they know that it will come. So all are prepared. People think that such an intervention will create a tighter national unity, that will give the revolutionary movement deeper support. But the fight will be very hard, and it's necessary to prepare for a very long fight because of this. You should know that Brazil is larger than the U.S. mainland; it will be very difficult, very hard for the United States to invade a country so big. But they will do it. In 1964, the American government was prepared to do it. This was revealed by one of the leaders of the coup d'etat of 1964, Carlos Lacerda. He said that he knew that U.S. government troops had prepared to invade Brazil to support the coup d'etat. The coup d'etat was very successful, so no invasion was necessary at that time. But people expect an invasion. I think that the American people need to be prepared for that and to know that. It's necessary to prepare the consciousness of the American people, not only the American left, but

also the liberals and all the sectors, who must understand that their country may fight a war more terrible than the one in Vietnam -- in Brazil. With the small force you have in the U.S., you must try to prevent the U.S. government from doing that. Maybe the only way you can do that is through revolution. I don't think that a real capitalist government will give up a country like Brazil to socialism. It's a very important country in the world, in Latin America in particular, and in Africa, because Brazil has very important geo-political relations with Africa. So it is almost impossible to think that a bourgeois government will not invade Brazil, that a new tragedy will not happen.

LNS: Do you have any kind of message for the American movement?

ARI: Well, what you can tell the American movement is that, first, what you do here is very important to us, because it gives very much confidence to us about revolution in our country. We know that what happens here, even the small things that happen in the U.S., have very strong repercussions around the world and for us. The second thing that I want to say is that we want and we expect that you will help us in the difficult times that will come. We want you to know what is happening with us, and we want you to have a real internationalist comprehension of the fight. This is absolutely essential, because the American left, the American people, are so responsible for the history of the world. So that's what we want from you -- that you fight in the United States, and that you help us in Brazil.

-30-

YOUNG SOCIALIST ALLIANCE MEETS IN MINNEAPOLIS

LIBERATION News Service

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (LNS) -- More than 800 members and guests of the Trotskyist Young Socialist Alliance met at the University of Minnesota campus over Christmas weekend for their ninth annual convention.

The YSA, which is closely linked to the So-

...more...

cialist Workers Party, is best known for its work in helping to build the mass movement in this country for immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam.

Among the resolutions passed by the delegates were:

++ to use the opportunity of upcoming electoral campaigns to work against the reliance of the American people on the Democratic and Republican parties, and to educate about socialism;

++ to build for a mass march in the spring around the slogan, "Bring All the Troops Home Now!";

++ to develop vigorous defense of all black organizations now suffering repression, and to use the slogan, "Black Control of the Black Community";

++ to push for campus demands that are anti-capitalist and are linked up with other national and international struggles.

The delegates overwhelmingly rejected political papers written by YSA locals from Madison, Wisc., and Gainesville, Fla., which had sought to move the YSA closer to the New Left. The two locals wanted the YSA to carry explicitly revolutionary banners in demonstrations called by anti-war coalitions and to adopt the slogan, "Support the Vietnamese revolution." They also urged that YSAers be present at more militant street demonstrations in order to voice criticisms of such "ultra-left" demonstrations.

This convention marked YSA's first formal workshop on women's liberation. Initial formulations included women's right to control their own bodies, 24-hour child care centers, equal pay for equal work, active recruitment of women into the anti-war movement, and support of all women's liberation groups. (Two of the four major proposals to the body were written and presented by women, and many women speakers contributed to discussion from the floor throughout the convention.)

The body heard greetings from representatives of groups affiliated with the YSA through the Fourth International (Trotskyist) from Australia, France, New Zealand, Denmark, Switzerland and Canada, and also from three representatives of Palestine liberation groups -- the Democratic Popular Front, the Popular Front, and the English-

language newspaper Free Palestine.

The YSA has been growing steadily since it was founded in 1960, but its largest growth occurred during the past year -- probably due to the break-up of SDS.

Total YSA membership is a little over 1,000, with locals in 41 of 50 states. 40% of YSA membership are women; 55% students (8% from junior and senior high schools), 10% are of Third World nationalities in the U.S.

-30-

+++++
STUDENT NEWSPAPER TURNED OVER TO
COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

By College Press Service

LA CROSSE, Wisc. -- CPS/LNS -- Control of the student newspaper of the Wisconsin State University at La Crosse is being given to the university's Mass Communications Department beginning next semester because of the university president's displeasure with the paper's content.

The newspaper, the Racquet, had come under considerable fire on several occasions from the town's commercial newspaper. The man who has been hired by the administration to supervise the Racquet next semester is city editor of that paper, the La Crosse Tribune. He intends to hold both positions.

The chain of events leading to the paper being given to the Communications Dept. is not unique. Similar events have occurred in Massachusetts and Colorado. Recently the Wisconsin paper has begun to take more leftist editorial positions. There also came a liberalization in the use of four-letter words in the paper.

The president of the university, Samuel Gates, focused his attack on the use of "objectionable" words. Most observers feel that the suppression of the paper was at least somewhat politically motivated. On his front lawn, Gates flies an American flag that is reportedly larger than any flown on a U. S. military base.

The newspaper's editor, Janell Bladow, and Gates had been at odds most of the semester. The situation came to a head after the Racquet reprinted the article "Student as Nigger."

-30-

ATROCITY
COMICS
PRESENTS:

WHITE MAKES RIGHT!

THE STORY OF
LAW AND ORDER
IN THE GHETTO



cartoon by Steve Gilbert
credit LNS



How do you stack up as "ACTION GUY"?

Think about these questions. Answer them as fairly as you can:

- Am I man enough to take a new direction and give up the old routine? YES NO
- Will I really enjoy the chance of adventure in far-away places? YES NO
- Am I in tough physical condition ... able to take a rugged, outdoor life? YES NO
- Am I able to think for myself in a tight spot? YES NO
- Am I a good team player, when teamwork counts most? YES NO
- Do I have mechanical aptitude? YES NO
- Am I better than average in character and responsibility? YES NO

If you can truly answer "yes" to these questions, chances are you can qualify as a combat soldier.

HERE'S WHAT'S WAITING FOR YOU ...

This can accompany the story on page 1--
THE MAKING OF THE AMERICAN SOLDIER

CREDIT LNS

Hi Guys.
ARE YOU READY
FOR THIS SHIT?

THE OFFICIAL
Peter Fonda AUTOGRAPHED MODEL
"PLASTIC"

CHOPPER KIT



EACH
SUPER KIT
CONTAINS:

American flag decals,
iron-on flag patches, sew-on flags,
paste-on flags, a keen "Stars & Stripes" helmet,
a pin-up poster of Peter Fonda on a Suzuki,
a season pass to the Sonny Barger film fest,
and detailed instructions on chopping your Honda,
Yamaha, cushman, Vespa - Allstate, and other
groovy bikes!



•YOU MEET THE NICEST PEOPLE ON A CHOPPER•

Credit Dallas Notes/LNS